

Message Text

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LONDON FOR MR. WEISS

1. SUMMARY. IN WIDE RANGING DISCUSSION NOVEMBER 12 WITH PM DIRECTOR WEISS, JACQUES MARTIN, DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE SECRETARIAT GENERAL DE LA DEFENSE NATIONAL (SGDN), ELABORATED ON SHIFT IN FRENCH NUCLEAR STRATEGY TOWARD MORE FLEXIBILITY. MARTIN ALSO UNDERLINED THAT TIMELY AND ADQUATE FLOW OF INFORMATION FROM US WOULD HAVE LED TO BETTER SUBSTANTIVE RESULTS IN NATO CONSULTATION ON MIDDLE EAST. MARTIN AND WEISS AGREED THAT INFORMAL US-GOF CONSULTATIONS ON POLITICAL/MILITARY ISSUES WOULD BE USEFUL. EMD SUMMARY.

2. US-FRENCH STRATEGY. WEISS MENTIONED THAT IN A PERIOD OF RAPIDLY EVOLVING TECHNOLOGY, IT WAS NECESSARY TO CONSTANTLY RE-EVALUATE OUR NUCLEAR STRATEGY TO ENSURE THAT IT REMAINS CREDIBLE. MARTIN ACKNOWLEDGED THAT FRENCH, TOO, RECOGNIZE IMPACT OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES ON OLD STRATEGIES. HE SAID FRENCH STRATEGY WAS IN PROCESS OF EVOLUTION AWAY FROM FORMER EMPHASIS ON IMMEDIATE MASSIVE RETALITATION ("GALLOIS SERVED A PURPOSE IN THE PAST" SAID MARTIN) AND TOWARDS "FLEXIBILITY" (ALTHOUGH MARTIN IMPLIED THAT ARGUMENTS ON THIS SUBJECT RAGED HOT AN HEAVY WITHIN GOF).

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3. PRESSED BY WEISS FOR A CLEARER DESCRIPTION OF WHAT "FLEXIBILITY" MEANT, MARTIN, WHILE REPEATING USUAL FRENCH AVESION TO CONVENTIONAL WAR CONCEDED THAT OBVIOUSLY SOME INTERMEDIATE CAPABILITY WAS NEEDED IF SUBSEQUENT RESORT TO STRATEGIC NUCLEAR WEAPONS WAS TO BE CREDIBLE. HE ADDED THAT

GROWING FRENCH TACTICAL NUCLEAR INVENTORY GAVE CAPABILITY TO RESORT TO BATTLEFIELD USE OF THESE WEAPONS RELATIVELY EARLY (HE MENTIONED ONE TO THREE DAYS) IN A CONFLICT TO DEMONSTRATE TO THE AGGRESSOR FRANCE'S DETERMINATION TO ESCALATE THE CONFLICT SHOULD THAT BECOME NECESSARY.

4. IF INITIAL BATTLEFIELD USE OF FRENCH TAC NUC WEAPONS FAILS TO FORCE AGGRESSOR TO TERMINATE ATTACK, MARTIN SAID FRENCH WERE PREPARED TO ESCALATE TO THE LEVEL OF DEEP PENETRATION NUCLEAR ATTACKS, IN THE FIRST INSTANCE PROBABLY CONSTRAINED TO MILITARY TARGETS LOCATED FAR BEHIND THE ENEMY'S FRONT LINE UNITS. (IT WAS UNCLEAR WHETHER MARTIN MEANT EASTERN EUROPE OR THE WESTERN SOVIET UNION.)

5. ALTHOUGH MARTIN WOULD NOT SPECIFY AT WHAT POINT FRENCH STRATEGY CALLED FOR USE OF THEIR STRATEGIC NUCLEAR WEAPONS AGAINST SOVIET POPULATION CENTERS, HIS EARLIER DISCUSSION LEFT CLEAR IMPRESSION THAT CURRENT FRENCH STRATEGY FORESEEN A NUMBER OF LEVELS OF NUCLEAR CONFLICT BELOW AN ALL-OUT EXCHANGE OF STRATEGIC NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

6. HE ALSO COMMENTED THAT HIS STAFF HAS UNDERTAKEN A "LEOPARD SPOT" MAPPING EXERCISE WHICH ANALYZED VARIOUS NUCLEAR LAY-DOWNS FOR DAMAGE EFFECTS WHICH HE SAID WERE LARGE. IN RESPONSE TO WEISS' COMMENTS ABOUT FUTURE TECHNOLOGIES INVOLVING IMPROVED ACCURACIES AND LOWER YIELD, MARTIN AGREED THAT SUCH IMPROVEMENTS COULD MAKE SUCH USE MORE CREDIBLE, ALTHOUGH IF ONE RESORTED TO NUCLEAR WEAPONS ONE HAD TO ACCEPT THE PROSPECT OF LARGE LOSSES.

7. COMMENT: MARTIN'S COMMENTS ADD TO THE GROWING EVIDENCE (E.G., PARIS 25458) THAT FRENCH ARE MOVING FROM THEIR EARLIER CONCEPT OF ALMOST IMMEDIATE AND TOTAL USE OF THEIR STRATEGIC NUCLEAR WEAPONS TOWARD INTERMEDIATE LEVELS OF NUCLEAR RESPONSE, IN EFFORT TO MAKE THEIR STRATEGY OF DETERRENCE MORE
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CREDIBLE TO SOVIETS.

8. NAC CONSULTATION. IN A LONG DISCUSSION OF THE CURRENT MIDDLE EAST CRISIS, MARTIN UNDERLINED UNEVEN QUALITY OR INTELLIGENCE AVAILABLE TO THE ALLIES. THE US CLEARLY HAS BEST INTELLIGENCE GATHERING FACILITIES. UK AND FRANCE, WHILE BETTER THAN OTHERS IN EUROPE, LACK SOME OF SOPHISTICATED TECHNOLOGY OF US (E.G. SATELLITES). FRG IS GOOD ON CENTRAL EUROPEAN INTELLIGENCE, BUT IS OUT OF PICTURE ON MIDDLE EAST. OTHER NATO ALLIES TEND TO HAVE VERY LARGE INTELLIGENCE GAPS, AND TO RELY HEAVILY ON INTELLIGENCE FROM NATO.

9. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, MARTIN SAID US SHOULD UNDERSTAND HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO ENSURE AND TIMELY SUPPLY OF US INTELLIGENCE IF WE EXPECT ALLIES TO SUPPORT OUR MOVES IN

CRISIS SITUATIONS.

10. MARTIN NOTED THAT WHILE US DID CALL IN NATO FOR ALLIED SUPPORT OF US ACTIONS REGARDING MIDDLE EAST, US FAILED TO PROVIDE TIMELY AND ADEQUATE INFORMATION REQUIRED TO SUPPORT ITS CALL.

11. HE CONCLUDED THAT ALLIED PROBLEMS WITH RECENT US APPROACH TO MIDDLE EAST SITUATION CENTERED MORE ON INADEQUACY OF CONSULTATION THAN ON SUBSTANTIVE DIFFERENCES. GIVEN THE FACTS AS HE NOW UNDERSTOOD THEM, MARTIN SAID HE BELIEVED US SUBSTANTIVE ACTION WAS CORRECT AND WOULD HAVE BEEN SUPPORTED IF CLEARLY PERCEIVED BY EUROPEANS AT THE TIME OF CRISIS.

12. US-FRENCH CONSULTATIONS. MR. WEISS SUGGESTED THAT IT MIGHT BE USEFUL TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITY OF INFORMAL, OFF-THE-RECORD MEETINGS BETWEEN SMALL GROUPS OF FRENCH AND AMERICAN OFFICIALS WHO SHARE SIMILAR INTERESTS IN STRATEGIC AND OTHER POLITICAL/MILITARY ISSUES. THE PURPOSE WOULD BE TO GENERATE FREE EXCHANGE OF VIEWS TO OBTAIN BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THINKING OF EACH SIDE. MARTIN RESPONDED THAT THE THOUGH SUCH EXCHANGE WOULD BE VERY USEFUL, AND HE SAW NO REASON WHY IT COULD NOT BE UNDERTAKEN. HE NOTED THAT FRENCH OFFICIALS HAVE SIMILAR TALKS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES. WEISS SUGGESTED THAT, IN INTEREST OF MAKING CONVERSATIONS AS PRODUCTIVE AS POSSIBLE, WE MIGHT THINK THAT MARTIN WOULD CONSIDER THE IDEA AND BE IN TOUCH

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WITH AMEMBASSY PARIS. WEISS MADE SIMILAR PROPOSITION TO SEILLIERE, DIPLOMATIC ADVISOR TO MINISTER OF THE ARMED FORCES GALLEY, WHO RESPONDED POSITIVELY AND ENTHUSIASTICALLY.

13. GENERAL COMMENT: IN RECENT WEEKS THE SGDN (WHICH IS ROUGHLY ANALOGOUS TO THE NSC STAFF) HAS BEEN DIRECTING A HIGH LEVEL REVIEW OF FRANCE'S TACTICAL NUCLEAR STRATEGY. MARTIN, THEREFORE, IS PARTICULARLY WELL POSITIONED TO COMMENT ON GOF NUCLEAR STRATEGY. HIS EXPOSITION ON FRENCH NUCLEAR STRATEGY (ABOVE) IS ONE THE MOST DETAILED AND AUTHORITATIVE WE HAVE RECEIVED. AGAINST BACKGROUND OF MARTIN'S KEY POSITION, OF THE TRANSITION IN FRENCH STRATEGY TOWARD WHAT POMPIDOU HAS PUBLICLY DESCRIBED AS "FLEXIBLE" NUCLEAR RESPONSE, OF OUR DESIRE TO ENCOURAGE US-FRENCH CONSULTATIONS IN AREAS WHERE WE MAY BE ABLE TO AFFECT DIRECTION OF FRENCH THINKING, AND OF THE POSITIVE REACTION OF MARTIN AND SEILLIERE TO WEISS' SUGGESTION, WE STRONGLY SUPPORT COMPLETELY THIS INITIATIVE FOR US-FRENCH CONSULTATIONS. WE WILL FOLLOW UP DISCREETLY WITH MARTIN AND SEILLIERE. IRWIN

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